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 DE [REDACTED] #2065 0531037  
 D 220845Z FEB 73 ZYM  
 FM VIENTIANE

25X1

TO THE WHITE HOUSE  
 STATE/RCI

S E C R E T [REDACTED] (SECTION 1 OF 2)

25X1

FROM: AMBASSADOR GODLEY, VIENTIANE 723  
 TO: IMMEDIATE - THE WHITE HOUSE FOR DR. KISSINGER  
 IMMEDIATE - SECSTATE FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY GREEN

1. IN ORDER TO RESPOND TO YOUR QUESTIONS, I THINK IT WOULD BE USEFUL AT THE OUTSET TO RECONSTRUCT THE ATMOSPHERE AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH ENVELOPED THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE RLG AND LPF IN THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS.

2. THE FIRST CRUCIAL POINT IS THAT, AS YOU KNOW, IN LAOS THE US WAS NEGOTIATING BY PROXY. UNLIKE THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE NORTH VIETNAMESE, WE WERE NOT DEALING DIRECTLY WITH THE ADVERSARY BUT AT BEST WERE ALLOWED BY THE RLG TO KIBITZ AND MAKE KNOWN OUR VIEWS TO THEM. OUR INFLUENCE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS DEPENDED PARTIALLY ON THE EXTENT THAT SOUVANNA AND PHENG CONVEYED TO US THE EXACT STATE OF PLAY AT ANY GIVEN TIME. IN THIS REGARD, HOWEVER, NEITHER PHENG NOR SOUVANNA KEPT US FULLY INFORMED ON EVERY CHANGE IN THE DRAFT AGREEMENT OR EVERY DETAIL OF THE NEGOTIATION.

3. ON A NUMBER OF ISSUES SUCH AS AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE, SOUVANNA AND PHENG REGISTERED OUR VIEWS BUT, WHETHER DELIBERATELY OR INADVERTENTLY, DID NOT OR COULD NOT INCORPORATE THEM INTO THE LAST-MINUTE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE LPF ON THE TEXT OF THE FINAL AGREEMENT. SOUVANNA HAD BEEN TOLD ABOUT THE NEED TO STAND FIRM AGAINST ANY REFERENCE TO AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE IN THE AGREEMENT. THIS POINT HAD BEEN STRESSED BY YOU, BY VICE PRESIDENT AGNEW, BY BILL SULLIVAN AS WELL AS BY DEAN AND MYSELF. YOU WILL NOTE THAT WHEN WE TRANSMITTED THE SUBSTANCE OF THE DRAFT AGREEMENT TO YOU ON FEBRUARY 13 IN VIENTIANE 699, AERIAL SURVEILLANCE WAS INCLUDED AND THAT WE DID URGE THE RLG AT THAT TIME TO HAVE THIS REFERENCE DELETED. WE KNOW THAT PHENG DID TRY TO HAVE THIS REFERENCE TAKEN OUT OF THE AGREEMENT BUT RAN INTO AN LPF STONE-WALL. AS WE REPORTED

\*\*\*\*\* \*WHSR COMMENT\*\*\*\*\*

HAK, SCOWCROFT, LORD, HOWE

MORI PER C05142622

DOS review completed.

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ON-FILE NSC RELEASE  
 INSTRUCTIONS APPLY.

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IN VIENTIANE 710 THE RLG SUCCESSFULLY INSERTED LANGUAGE PERMITTING THE CROSSING OF LPF TERRITORY FOR RESUPPLYING RLG POSITIONS IN LPF CONTROLLED TERRITORY. FAILING TO GET FURTHER CONCESSIONS, IT ACQUIESCED IN THE CLAUSE ABOUT "ESPIONAGE". IN SHORT SOUVANNA AND PHENG TRIED TO COMPLY WITH OUR WISHES, BUT FACED WITH LPF INTRANSIGENCE AND THE FERVENT DESIRE TO ACHIEVE A NEUTRAL SETTLEMENT, HAD TO ACCEPT CERTAIN COMPROMISES.

4. SOUVANNA AND PHENG COMMITTED A SERIOUS TACTICAL MISTAKE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. THEY AGREED TO USING THE LPF DRAFT AS A BASIS FOR NEGOTIATION, AND THE LPF PLAYED THIS ADVANTAGE FOR ALL IT WAS WORTH. THE RLG NEGOTIATORS WERE, AT ALL TIMES, AT THE DISADVANTAGE OF HAVING TO SUGGEST CHANGES IN THE DRAFT. THE RESULT WAS LPF PROPAGANDISTIC LANGUAGE IN THE FINAL AGREEMENT.

5. BUT ABOVE ALL THE AGREEMENT WAS NEGOTIATED ON THE RLG SIDE BY THE TWO MEMBERS OF THE PRESENT ROYAL GOVERNMENT WHO ARE GENUINE NEUTRALISTS COMMITTED TO LAO UNITY. THEIR POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY MEANT THEY WERE WILL TO COMPROMISE ON ARTICLES WHICH WE AND MOST OF THE MEMBERS OF THE LAO RIGHT MIGHT NOT HAVE ACCEPTED UNDER THE BEST CIRCUMSTANCES. THE IMPORTANT THING, HOWEVER, IS THAT THEY WERE AND ARE ACCEPTABLE TO SOUVANNA AND PHENG IN THEIR SEARCH FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.

6. THUS, FOR EXAMPLE, IN RESPONSE TO OUR STRONG DEMARCHE TO EXCISE REFERENCE TO THE UNITED STATES FROM THE TEXT OF THE FINAL AGREEMENT, SOUVANNA AND PHENG VIGOROUSLY OPPOSED THE LPF EFFORT TO LINK THE USG TO THE BOMBING IN LAOS AND TO HAVE THAILAND CONVICTED IN WRITING FOR FURNISHING THE BASE AREA FROM WHICH MILITARY ACTIVITIES WERE CONDUCTED IN LAOS. HOWEVER SOUVANNA AND PHENG DID COMPROMISE RELATIVELY EARLY IN THE NEGOTIATIONS -- CERTAINLY BY FEBRUARY 13 -- ON THIS POINT. THEY AGREED TO SPECIFY THE US AND THAILAND BY NAME AMONG FOREIGN COUNTRIES WHO ARE EXHORTED TO COMPLY WITH THE 1962 GENEVA AGREEMENTS. SINCE WE SIGNED THE 1962 AGREEMENTS AND HAVE CONSISTENTLY OVER THE YEARS EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR THEIR USE AS THE BASIS FOR A LAO SETTLEMENT, THIS DID NOT SEEM UNREASONABLE TO SOUVANNA.

7. THIS INTRODUCES THE QUESTION OF SOUVANNA'S MOTIVATION IN SIGNING THE AGREEMENT ON FEBRUARY 21 IN ITS FINAL FORM. SOME THAI AND AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS REPORT THAT THE US APPLIED PRESSURE ON SOUVANNA FOR AN EARLY OVERALL AGREEMENT. THIS IS COMPLETELY UNTRUE. SOUVANNA HAD BEEN TOLD BOTH BY BILL SULLIVAN AND MYSELF, AND INDIRECTLY BY YOU THROUGH THE MESSAGES I RELAYED TO HIM, THAT AMERICAN AIR SUPPORT WOULD CONTINUE UNTIL A SETTLEMENT WAS REACHED (TOKYO 255). THE REAL REASONS, IN MY OPINION, FOR SOUVANNA'S AGREEMENT TO SIGN THE ACCORD AT THIS TIME

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WERE FIRST: HIS BLEAK ASSESSMENT OF THE MILITARY SITUATION NOT WITHSTANDING ALL BUT US AIR SUPPORT COUPLED WITH HIS FEAR OF NVA REINFORCEMENT; AND SECOND: THE SEVERE AND CONCERTED OPPOSITION GENERATED BY THE RIGHT TO HIS NEGOTIATING A GLOBAL AGREEMENT WHICH INCLUDED POLITICAL PROVISIONS UNACCEPTABLE TO THE RIGHT. IF HE HAD WAITED TOO LONG BEFORE GETTING A SIGNED DOCUMENT AND GAINING INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR IT, THE RIGHT WOULD HAVE HAD TIME TO MOVE AGAINST HIM. HE WAS THUS UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE FROM BOTH SIDES, AND ISOLATED WITHIN HIS OWN GOVERNMENT. AS SOUVANNA TOLD US AT THE DINNER FOR BILL SULLIVAN ON FEBRUARY 15, HE DID NOT SEE HOW THE MILITARY SITUATION WOULD IMPROVE OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. QUITE TO THE CONTRARY, HIS REGIONAL COMMANDERS HAD ALL TOLD HIM THAT THE MILITARY SITUATION COULD ONLY DETERIORATE WITH TIME. HENCE, SOUVANNA CONCLUDED THAT DELAYING THE SIGNING OF AN AGREEMENT

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